

BOOK REVIEWS

Terminologia anatomica: international anatomical terminology

By the Federative Committee on Anatomical Terminology (FCAT). Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. ISBN-10: 3-13-114361-4. ISBN-13: 978-3-13-114361-7. 300 pp. 1998. £48.62 hardback.

Terminologia Histologica: International Terms for Human Cytology and Histology

By the Federative International Committee on Anatomical Terminology (FICAT). Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. ISBN-10: 0-7817-6610-9. ISBN-13: 978-0-7817-6610-4. 213 pp. 2008. £21.00 hardback.

Terminologia Anatomica (TA) is the international standard on human anatomical terminology. It was developed by the Federative Committee on Anatomical Terminology (FCAT) and the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA) and was released in 1998. It supersedes the previous standard, *Nomina Anatomica*. *Terminologia Histologica* (TH) is a companion text to TA developed by the renamed Federative International Committee on Anatomical Terminology (FICAT) and was published in 2008. TA contains terminology for about 7500 human gross (macroscopic) anatomical structures, while TH contains terminology for cellular structures, tissue and organs at the microscopic level. The books present the Latin term for each structure accompanied by the term in current usage in English-speaking countries. Where spelling varies between UK and USA English the term is marked with a small triangle, but only the UK spelling is listed. (The meaning of this triangle is not explained, though after a few examples it becomes clear.)

TA begins with a section listing general terms, parts of the body and the terms used for planes, lines and regions. In the next section the terminology is divided into systems: Bones, Joints, Muscles, Alimentary system, Respiratory system, Thoracic cavity, Urinary system, Genital systems, Abdominopelvic cavity, Endocrine glands, Cardiovascular system, Lymphoid system, Nervous system, Sense organs and the Integument. The book also has a chapter giving an interesting brief history of the efforts to develop an internationally recognized standard for anatomical terminology. Following the terminology lists there are indexes of eponyms, Latin terms, and English terms. TH follows a similar logical structure starting with cytology terms, then general histology followed by each of the organ systems in similar order to that found in TA, and ending with the same three indexes.

Anatomical and histological terminology is rooted in the classical languages, especially Latin. This can be increasingly

challenging to doctors and scientists with the demise in the teaching of Latin at school, as this means that terms have to be learned, often with no background knowledge of the meaning of the Latin to make the learning easier, or of grammatical rules that make sense of plural terms and the agreement of adjectives with their nouns. This in turn leads to an increasing use of the English terms which brings an increased risk of confusion (especially when co-workers of different nationalities interact). Matters are further confused for the student/doctor/scientist by different reference sources using either common 'anglicized' versions of terminology or the formal Latin terms. These two books form a useful bridge between the two, and by presenting the standard terms for both Latin and English, they form a very useful reference for avoiding misunderstanding. It is certainly my opinion that this represents an essential source of reference for anyone studying the anatomical sciences. The indexes form an invaluable tool for finding either the Latin or English term. There is a CD-ROM version of TA that would make this even easier, and would therefore be the version I would recommend, while TH comes with the CD-ROM included in the price. In my opinion it would be very useful if the publisher or FICAT made the contents of both of these texts available as an online service, especially as TA seems to be no longer freely available.

The only real criticism I have is that while the authors acknowledge that UK and USA spelling of English terminology is equally valid, and go to the trouble of marking entries where there is a difference between the two, they only list the UK version. It would have been much more satisfactory to list both, especially for readers in the USA.

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